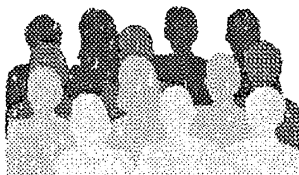


**The Iowa Commission on the Status
of
African-Americans**

A STRATEGIC PLAN

(Window: 1999 through 2001)



Submitted:

Berlinda Tyler-Jamison
Consultant

November, 1998

FORWARD

On Saturday, October 17, 1998 the Commissioners and the executive staff of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans met at the Holiday Inn in Waterloo, Iowa. The purpose of this event was to develop a set of strategies that would provide added momentum and focus to an organization that is already enjoying *and affecting* positive growth both within the confines of its organization and in Iowa's African-American communities.

The people who brought their collective intellect and experience to this "strategic thinking" session were:

Theresa Clark, Fort Madison
Tamera Diggs-Tate, Des Moines
Chair James Hester, Davenport
Isisah Johnson, Dennison
Wilfred (Mickey) Johnson, Waterloo
Darryl Lipscomb, Cedar Rapids
Gwenda Naylor, Fort Dodge
Camille Scully, Waterloo
Jerome Thomas, Dubuque
Romelle Slaughter, Commission Administrator
Kim Cheek, Commission Program Planner

During this all day strategic session "a map for the immediate future" was drawn that enabled the Commissioners and staff to "plot" the organization's key

Forward - cont.

initiatives and critical strategies, thereby charting a course that will begin in 1999 and be completed in the year 2001.

The day's "visioning" required a primary level of examination of the following organizational constructs and conditions:

The Commission's Ideological Mission and State Mandated Charge
The Continuities and Discontinuities that Affect the Commission
The Commission's '96 - '98 Performance
The Businesses and Customers of the Commission

An analysis of the above, yielded the critical strategies and proposed actions contained in this document.

It is hoped that the process employed during the October 17th session and the resultant information contained herein have met the Commissioners' expectations as stated at the beginning of the meeting i.e. :

- that a "road map" be developed to provide the Commission with direction for the next three years*
- that a coordinated, synchronized approach to "living" the Commission's mission be developed*
 - that actions which are "do-able" and realistic be identified*
 - that the strategic role of the Commission be clearly articulated*

Submitted:
Berlinda Tyler-Jamison
Consultant

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The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans
AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ITS STRATEGIC PLAN

On October 17, 1998 nine Commissioners and the executive staff of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans met at the Holiday Inn in Waterloo, Iowa to plot "a map to the future", that would further its mission of "...improving the quality of life for Iowa's African-American population..." and which would help it achieve its vision of becoming "...THE recognized resource and...THE agent of positive change...regarding ...issues and services that impactAfrican-American Iowans". The strategic plan spans the period, 1999 through the year 2001.

This aggressive plan consists of 5 key initiatives, 5 objectives and more than 30 critical actions:

FUND DEVELOPMENT

In the plan: Implementation of a "private sector" fund development plan; acquiring 501C3 tax exempt status; conducting successful special fundraisers and possibly collaborating on the employment of a professional fundraiser (among other actions)

"INFLUENCE" DEVELOPMENT

In the plan: To strengthen the Commission's ability to influence policies and programs that do and will have a significant impact upon African-Americans; "Commission/Legislator Communication Plan"; Leadership Breakfasts; policy "positions" consistent with the interests of African-American Iowans (among other actions)

PROGRAM UTILIZATION

In the plan: To create and/or reinforce learning and social opportunities that respond to the unique needs of African-Americans, with special attention given to lower income youth; Youth Commission; State-wide mentoring program; African-American Needs Assessment study (among other actions)

COMMISSION "PRESENCE"

In the plan: To create and promote a supportive and responsive image as a leader throughout the State of Iowa regarding issues that affect Black Iowans; professional marketing plan; town meetings; "Friends of the Commission" diverse volunteer base (among other actions)

ALLIANCE DEVELOPMENT

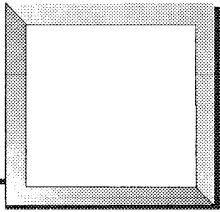
In the plan: To collaborate with value compatible organizations to the mutual benefit of both the Commission and the other organization; special projects (among other actions)

MISSION AND THE STATE MANDATED CHARGE

The Iowa Administrative Code (chapter 214A.141) stipulates that the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans (hereafter referred to as ICOSAA) will direct itself to the business of **"...improv[ing] the quality of life for Iowa's African-American population"**. (Please refer to figure 1). The Code also mandates the Commission to **"...study the changing needs and problems of African-Americans in the State and recommend new programs, policies and constructive action to the governor and the general assembly including, but not limited to [more than 10 major areas of life or systems] i.e.:**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| -Employment | -Labor law |
| -African-American volunteerism | -Education |
| -Health | -Housing |
| -Social welfare | -Human rights |
| -Recreation | -Social service programs |
| -Legal system | -Afric.-Amer. econ. devel. |
| -Expanded consumer programs | -Afric.-Amer. families |
| -Legal Treatment | -Civil and Polit. treatment |

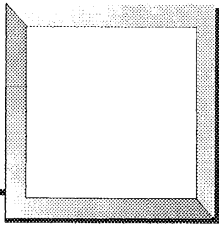
The Commissioners affirmed the organization's mission while at the same time noting that the above state-mandated charge (figure 2) may be a rather aggressive goal for a decentralized Commission with limited human resources. (Subsequent to the above observation, the Commissioners identified strategies designed to ameliorate *some* of the strain between available human resources and the State's aggressive "Commission agenda". The tension between human resources and organizational expectations is not uncommon in either the for profit or not for profit world).



The Stated **MISSION** of the Commission
(Iowa Administrative Code: Chapter 214A.141)

- **"The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans ... will consider, review and recommend programs, services, policies, legislation and administrative rules [...advocate, coordinate, implement and provide services to and on behalf of Black citizens...] that will improve the QUALITY OF LIFE FOR IOWA'S AFRICAN-AMERICAN POPULATION"**

FIGURE 1



EVERYTHING TO EVERYBODY ALL THE TIME

"...study the changing needs and problems of African-Americans in the State, and recommend new programs, policies and constructive action to the governor and the general assembly including , but not limited to, the following areas..."

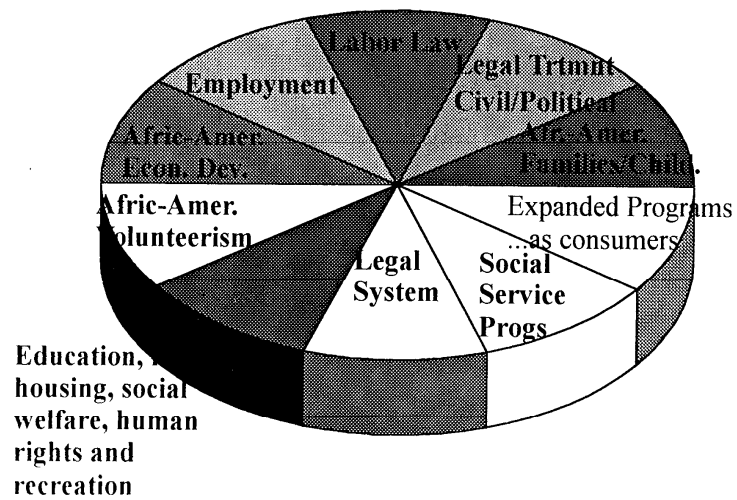


FIGURE 2

THE COMMISSION'S "VISION"

The "Vision Statement" is one of the last items to be prepared for inclusion in a strategic plan because the components or core provisions of most real vision statements are found in the organization's selected key initiatives and objectives. Hence, counter to theory, one "backs into the vision statement".

Following is the proposed Vision Statement of the Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans. Its contents have been extrapolated or inferred from the "map" that the organization has plotted for itself.

"The Iowa Commission on the Status of African-Americans will be
THE recognized resource and THE agent of positive change in the
State of Iowa regarding existing or potential issues and services that
do or will have a significant impact on African-American Iowans"

THE ASSESSMENT: CONTINUITIES AND DISCONTINUITIES

Strategic planning of any kind requires an assessment of the environment in which an organization exists or operates (be it a for profit or not-for-profit organization). While there are numerous types of environmental assessments, until recently many strategists have relied upon the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity, Threats analysis which is more commonly known as the "SWOT". There is growing consensus among seasoned strategic planners that while the SWOT analysis provides some preliminary insight into the "world" of an organization, it generally "yields the obvious" i.e. what is already known. Further, the time during the actual planning session that it takes to conduct a SWOT is considerable; prolongs the session and usually provides subjective information (translation: "soft" reliability) that still must be tested *after the fact* of the planning. Hence, strategists have begun to move away from SWOT's and are now increasingly conducting performance analyses *before the fact* of the planning. Such an analysis enables the planning participants to consider more objective information when drawing conclusions about an organization's internal and external environment. One such "performance analysis" is known as *Continuities and Discontinuities*. Using this technique, the congruencies and incongruencies in the organization's "world" that should be considered when developing strategies are culled from the organization's:

- budgets (spanning three years)
- annual reports (spanning three years)
- utilization or program reports (spanning three years)
- Commission or board minutes (spanning at least 18 months)
- position descriptions
- state charters, where applicable
- reports from staff and other stakeholders

The Assessment: Continuities/Discontinuities - cont.

5.

Hence, *Continuities/Discontinuities* was the technique used when conducting ICOSAA's environmental assessment. The emergent congruencies and incongruencies in ICOSAA's "world" follow and are not listed in order of importance.

CONGRUENCIES

The staffing at ICOSAA is of quality and stable (there has been no turnover in this two person office within the last 12 months)

Commissioners have not limited their interests/concerns to one issue i.e. they are not myopic (please refer to figure 3)

State funding has not steadily declined and recently has increased by 17% (please refer to figure 4)

BOTH CONGRUENCIES & INCONGRUENCIES

There is continuity among the Commission membership (turnover appears to be paced) but the "member participation" has not been consistent

The Commission's "presence" among Iowa African-American communities appears to be growing however, there is some question re: its "presence" in other sectors of various communities (ex. power brokers). The exception may be in Des Moines (the site of the Commission office and the state capital).

Commission programming for African-Americans continues to grow however, the locations for one of its most expensive endeavors i.e. "Boys to Men" Retreat, *may become* more of a "cost" than a "benefit", given the perceived impracticality of the sites for the Retreat

INCONGRUENCIES

ICOSAA wishes to secure charitable, philanthropic dollars from the private sector and other public sector funders but it is not perceived as a charitable organization (it is a government entity)

INCONGRUENCIES - continued

ICOSAA wishes to secure charitable dollars but its services or business products are not "easy services to which to give" i.e. they are not tangible - they are preventive. Numerically, there is not a large constituency base for the work of ICOSAA. (It may be that the constituency is simply untapped).

ICOSAA wishes to secure charitable dollars but doesn't have a defined fund development strategy

The ICOSAA administrator must function as an administrator, facilitator, educator and volunteer coordinator for the entire State of Iowa

The Commission's "radar screen" is very wide however there are only 10 commissioners and two full time staff to track and facilitate a response to the developments on that "screen".

(Please refer to figures 2 and 3)

The Commission has evidenced a desire to be an "activist" organization but there is no clear consensus re: the practical definition of "activist" or "activism"

The Human Rights Code primarily directs the Commission to be examiners and conveners which can make it difficult to affect tangible outcomes in a time limited manner (Some of the underlying frustration of Commissioners may in part, be attributable to this fact)

ICOSAA "cooperates" with other organizations but does not actually "partner" with them for its benefit i.e. it "talks" and works with other organizations on a limited basis but does not actually team with other organizations on a more sustained basis for mutual benefit (This is not to imply that "marriage" with another organization is in order. It is to say that "dating" would be of benefit as opposed to being "casual acquaintances").

Note from the consultant:

An unknown environmental factor which must now be considered is the change of leadership in the Governor's office and its implications for ICOSAA

FIGURE 3

SOME "COMMISSIONER THINKING"

Source: Commission Meeting Minutes - '96-'98

▪ ADVOCACY

- Conduct more constituent related projects
- Political networking ex. dialogue with gubernatorial candidates
- Advocate for changes in policies and practices that affect Afric-Amer. ex. more Blacks on police force, busing, desegregation, charter schools, crim. justice, education
- Grassroots outreach; "walk the streets"; find out what's happening

▪ FUND DEVELOPMENT

- Secure recognized, accepted not for profit status (501C3)
- Private sector fund development
- Adequate Commission resources

▪ EDUCATION

- Clearly defined, DOCUMENTED issues; "making the case" re: Afric. Amer. needs
- Continue Leadership Breakfasts but move beyond to next step

▪ COLLABORATION

- Alliance development ex. relationship with the State Education Board

▪ EXPANSION

- Expand into Southern and Western Iowa

Annual Allocation/Budget

fiscal years '94/'95 through '97/'98

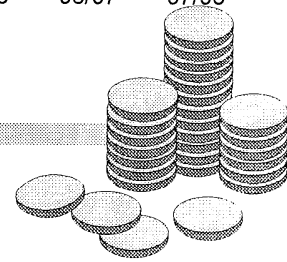
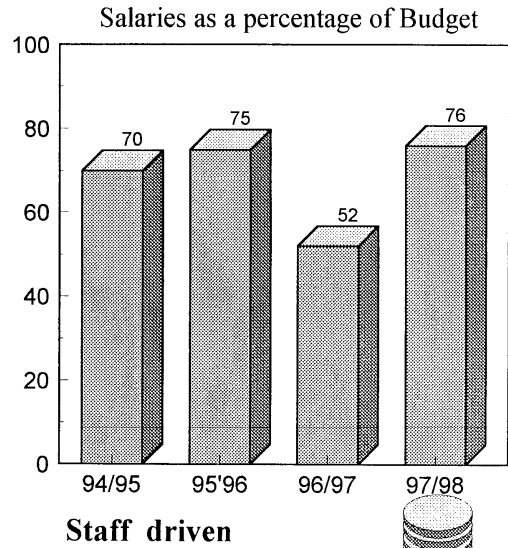
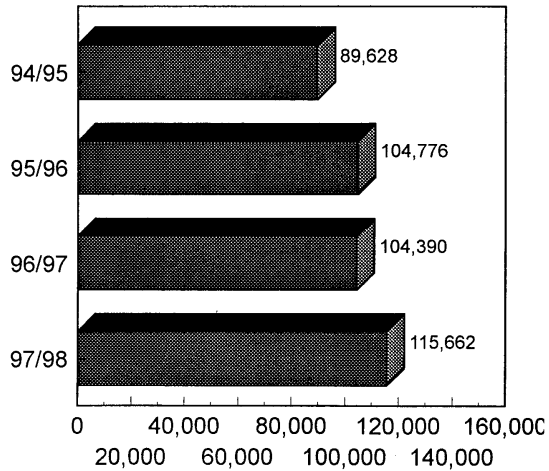


FIGURE #4

THE BUSINESSES AND CUSTOMERS OF THE COMMISSION

After careful consideration, the Commissioners and staff agreed that with some *minor modifications*, ICOSAA's businesses and customers remain the same as those identified in 1995.

Note: A radical change in the businesses or customers of an organization such as the Commission in less than four years would be unusual. Further, the identified customers and businesses are consistent with the analysis of the materials cited on page three of this document. Nowhere in the materials provided was there evidence that there was a significant change in ICOSAA's businesses or customers

BUSINESS #1 *(Conveyor of and conduit for) Information and Education*

Primary Customers: African-American Iowans with a special emphasis on
the lower income, unempowered Black citizenry

Local and state legislative branches of government

BUSINESS #2 *Systems Advocacy*

Primary Customers: Local and state legislative branches of government

Governor

BUSINESS #3 *Networking/Coalition Building*

Primary Customers: Civic organizations
Civil rights organizations
Business Community

Given the entities cited above, the Commissioners and staff agreed that its customers **require** the following from the Commission:

- timely "results" and not simply "talk"
- clear communication from ICOSAA that "closes the loop" on questions or issues that have arisen
- supportive and accountable leadership from staff and the Commissioners

THE KEY INITIATIVES AND CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

After the planning participants' careful evaluation of ICOSAA's strategic accomplishments during the period 1995 - 1997 and their deliberation regarding future organizational movement five key initiatives and accompanying primary objectives emerged.

Key Initiative #1: **Fund Development**

Primary Objective: To diversify the funding base of ICOSAA by implementing a "private sector" fund development plan by first quarter, 2000

Key Initiative #2: **"Influence" Development**

Primary Objective: To strengthen ICOSAA's ability to influence policies and programs that do and will have a significant impact upon African-American Iowans. (Note: this is an on-going function hence, the allocation of a timeline would be pointless)

Key Initiative #3: **Program Utilization**

Primary Objective: By third quarter, 2001, to create new learning and social opportunities and reinforce existing ones that respond to the unique needs of African-Americans, with special attention given to lower income youth

Key Initiative #4;

Commission "Presence"/Image

(Note: Though this item is similar to key initiative #2 there is enough distinction between the two to warrant it as a separate initiative)

Primary Objective:

By the first quarter, 2000, to create and promote a supportive and responsive image as a leader throughout the State of Iowa regarding issues that affect Black Iowans.

(Note: This objective is extrapolated from the Commissioners' assessment of "what its clients want from it". Please see page 8 of this document)

Key Initiative #5:

Alliance Development

Primary Objective:

By the third quarter, '99 to collaborate in "real time" with organizations whose values and missions are not in opposition to those of ICOSAA and with whom both (ICOSAA and the other collaborating organization) can achieve mutual benefit.

(Note: This objective was extrapolated from both participant discussion and from the incongruity re: "partnership". Please see page 6 of this document).

THE ICOSAA ACTION PLAN

Note: An "Accountable Party" is the "point person" i.e. the person who is responsible or accountable for **pulling together the necessary resources to assure that the assigned action is completed.** Such a designation does NOT mean that he or she is the only person responsible for accomplishing the task.

Upon review of the following document, the Commissioner or staff will note that some of the Commissioners and/or staff have been assigned to given "actions". These assignments were based on either the expressed interest of the "accountable party" or upon the admittedly, limited knowledge that the consultant was able to discern about each person during the strategic planning session. *No doubt, there will be revisions in some of the assignments and timelines, given the Commissioners' first-hand knowledge of ICOSAA's resources and talent.* The "actions" where there are no designated "accountable persons" remain to be assigned.

After the Commission's review of the plan and after any revisions have been made, it is strongly suggested that the Commission's Program Planner, **Kim Cheek** develop a work document entitled a Program, Evaluation, Review Technique, otherwise known as a PERT chart to assist the Commission in monitoring completion of its action plan (the PERT chart is a linear document which would include micro steps for each action)

Finally, while Romelle Slaughter is not cited as an "accountable party" for every action, it should be recognized that as the Administrator, he would be an integral player in all actions.

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE:

Fund Development "...private sector fund development plan..."

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Identify constituents i.e. prospective benefactors who can be "positioned" or groomed to support ICOSAA ex. -advertisers -corporations -legislators -individual philanthropists	Isisah Johnson & Theresa Clark	Feb. '99	No direct expense
Secure Commission's tax exempt 501C3 status Note: It was agreed that Commissioners would equally divide the expenses associated with this action	Mickey Johnson	June '99	\$600-\$700
Suggested action from consultant: Explore and if viable, employ a "shared", part-time professional fundraiser to develop a private sector grant development plan for ICOSAA, after which said person would pursue "gifts", per the identified plan. Note: This may be the area in which ICOSAA could collaborate with other orgs., per the "Alliance Development", Key Initiative #5	Hester and Slaughter	September, '99	The cost is dependent upon the number of collaborating organizations. Would recommend no more than one other org. at cost of \$10,000 to ICOSAA
Implement marketing strategies to foster a "giving" relationship with constituents to include but not be limited to the distribution of ICOSAA's newsletter	Slaughter and accountable entities in the Marketing Plan	Tied to the Marketing Plan timelines. See Action _____	Included in the Marketing Budget

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE:

Fund Development "...private sector fund development plan ...".....Innovative Fundraiser

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Establish special "fundraising event" parameters Recommendation: Fundraiser should be one that nets at least \$20,000		May, 1999	No direct cost
Identify the appropriate Special Events fundraiser(s) Note: this must be an event(s) that will attract a diverse group of people who have a reasonable amount of discretionary funds		June, 1999 (Accommodates the Market Plan timeline)	No direct cost
Recruit Special Event Fundraiser volunteers Note: These volunteers must have good organizing skills; have "contacts"; can work fairly autonomously and be do-ers.		Nov. '99	No direct cost
Conduct the fundraiser	Chair, Special Events Vols. and Slaughter	Nov. 2000 (A good, profitable fundraiser should take a year to plan and implement)	The expenses should come out of the gross revenue (and usually should account for no more than 30% of the gross revenue)

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE: "Influence" Development "...strengthen ICOSAA's ability to influence policies..."

Action	Accountable Party	Completion Date	Estimated Cost
Identify the policy <u>issues</u> and the Commission's <u>position</u> on each issue ex. legislative funding, social promotion, foster care boards etc.	Slaughter	This is both a reactive and proactive process since ICOSAA will have to act on some issues as they emerge. However, there are some issues already on the horizon that ICOSAA may wish to address hence, the date of Feb. '99 as a beginning date	No direct cost
Develop a Leadership Breakfast agenda and procedures i.e. the focus, the program/agenda, the follow-up and the "how" and the "when"		March '99	To be projected by staff
Incorporate ICOSAA's policy positions into the "Commissioner/ Legislator" Plan and Leadership Breakfasts (see above and below)		Beginning in March '99	No direct cost
Implement "Commissioner/ Legislator" Communication Program i.e. -Each commissioner meets personally with his/her legislator at least once a year -Regular Commission updates by e-mail and hard copy to legislators under the signature of the commissioner whose community is represented by the legislator. (communications should note what "did" and what "could" have happened	Hester	This is an on-going process that should begin no later than March, '99	Assume \$500

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE: "Influence" Development "...strengthen ICOSAA's ability to influence policies..."

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Secure lobbyist to voluntarily conduct in-service with the Commissioners on effective lobbying		March '99	No direct cost
Continue Leadership Breakfasts, per the "agenda" and "legislator communication plan" described in the preceding section		April '99	To be projected by staff
Conduct lobbying in-service with Commissioners		May '99	No direct cost

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE: Program Utilization..."...create and/or reinforce ...opportunities that respond to the unique needs of African-Americans...attention... youth...."

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Reevaluate the "Boys to Men" Retreat in terms of expense; sponsorship and location		April, '99	To be projected by staff
If the "Boys to Men" Retreat is deemed viable, (see above) and after any revisions have been made (ex. location), secure sponsorship from major civic organization or business ex. Rotary	Cammie Scully & Jerome Thomas	June, '99 (for upcoming year 2000 at the latest)	To be projected by staff
Reactive the Youth Commission Note: The purpose of the Youth Commission; its function; incentives for participation and its relationship to ICOSAA must be clearly articulated. To begin reactivation each commissioner is expected to bring one youth to a designated commission meeting.		Sept. '99	To be projected by staff
Establish a statewide mentoring program for African-American youth under the auspices of ICOSAA Note: This action may be one of the areas that ICOSAA would wish to collaborate on re: its Alliance Development strategy.		Sept. 2000	To be projected by staff.
Secure volunteer researchers to conduct an Assessment of the Needs of Iowan African-Americans	Scully and Naylor	Sept. 2000	No direct cost
Complete the above Assessment of Need	Volunteer researchers	Sept. 2001	Approx. \$1,000

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE: Commission "Presence"/Image..."...create and promote a supportive and responsive image as a leader throughout the State..."

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Identify two prospective volunteer marketing professionals from the community to become ICOSAA's time-limited marketing team	Diggs-Tate, Hester	Jan. '99	No direct cost
Develop the approach i.e. the "ask" to use with prospective volunteers. In other words to answer the questions "why should I do this and what do I get out of it?" before they ask the questions	Diggs-Tate, Hester (they represent the larger metropolitan areas on the Comm.)	Feb. '99	No direct cost
Establish the Marketing budget (the cart before the horse). ICOSAA knows what it can afford	Slaughter	March '99	Suggest a cap of no more than \$10,000
Secure the volunteer marketers to develop the Marketing plan	Diggs-Tate, Hester	March '99	No direct cost
Develop a diverse volunteer component known as "Friends of ICOSAA". These friends will not only be a source of additional revenue but will be "informed" supporters of ICOSAA's work and mission	Theresa Clark and Mickey Johnson Note: If deemed viable, the fundraiser could assume responsibility, after hiring him	Begin to build this component by May '99	Should be minimal; staff must project cost
The Marketing Plan is developed. The plan should include town meetings & pub. hearings	Marketing Volunteers	September '99	No direct cost
Implementation of the Marketing Plan begins	Per the plan	Per the plan	See suggested "cap", above

THE ACTION PLAN

INITIATIVE and OBJECTIVE: Alliance Development "...collaborate.. with organizations... with whom ICOSAA... can achieve mutual benefit"

<i>Action</i>	<i>Accountable Party</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
Identify any agencies with whom an alliance would be inappropriate (re: values, programs, reputation etc.) and eliminate them from consideration	Slaughter	April '99	No direct cost
Determine organizations with whom an alliance might be mutually beneficial ex. Commission on Women, Elderly - Gray Panthers, Human Rights Commission	Slaughter	April '99	No direct cost
Quietly, engage in discussions with prospective partners and secure tentative agreements to collaborate in specific areas ex. mentoring program (see Program Utilization) or professional fundraiser (see Fund Development)	Slaughter and Isisah Johnson	May '99	No direct cost
Commission approves alliance, if the conditions are satisfactory	Commissioners	June '99	Dependent upon the areas of collaboration
Begin collaborative relationship	Slaughter & Hester	Sept. 99	See above